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DIRT BIKE

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DECEMBER 1977

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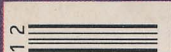
\$1.00

UK60p

125cc
CONTROVERSY:
BROC GLOVER
TELLS
HIS SIDE

TEST:
CAN-AM
125
QUALIFIER

SMITH TAKES
500 LAURELS



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NATIONAL

WORLD SPEEDWAY

DIRT BIKE

DECEMBER 1977 VOLUME SEVEN NUMBER TWELVE

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Quiet, heavy and fast

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ON THE COVER: John Therriault shot the action. Jim Gianatsis lensed the laurels; Marty Smith earned them.

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"SHE TAKES, JUST LIKE A WOMAN. . .

THE WOMEN'S NATIONALS

*Upstream all the way,
but the Fish made it*

by Woods

Color photography by John Rocha

Sad to say, our women's correspondent, Sir James Garret-Smith, passed on the opportunity to cover this year's race. It seems that Sir James, who, stuffy as he may seem, is a sensitive old codger, was deeply hurt by the critical responses to his last year's coverage. Many women, particularly those connected with the race, objected to Garret-Smith's reportage on the basis that he mentioned little about who-passed-whom, instead concentrating upon the sociological-cum-historical aspects of the event.

This year's coverage, then, will perhaps lack the flair, the *joie de vivre*, of his performance, but hopefully it will satisfy those who prefer a blow-by-blow account of the competition.

Sir James will return, however, rest assured of that. It's just that he had a conflict in schedule. He had already been commissioned to cover the Leather and Rubber Products Dealers' Show for *Beautiful Bruisers* magazine . . .

The IWMA seems to have a problem with the weather gods. Last year, when the Women's Nationals were held at Indian Dunes, temperatures danced around the 110-degree mark. It is miraculous that most of the racers didn't drop of heat exhaustion.

This year the Championship covered two days, and was held at Racing World in Escape Country. Seemingly out of spite, the weather shifted from an unseasonable cool spell a week before the race to pump thermometers over 90 for both days of racing.

But, while families and the occasional spectator crouched next to cars and vans looking for shade



and wishing they'd brought full coolers, the racing ladies went out and put on quite a show.

Racing World, located in Trabuco Canyon, California, is a bad place to be hot in, as is most of Southern California that doesn't have an

ocean within walking distance. It is dry, cactus-ridden (the kids who weren't watching the racing had a fine time chasing lizards and digging spines out of themselves), and has about as much opportunity for shade as you'd expect in a desert

environment. On a hot day, it is hot. Despite the heat, however, the racing went off well. Saturday saw a Grand Prix in each of the 125 and 250 classes. Two hours over an interesting and varied course. Sunday's motocross track, termed the "Euro" track, was well prepared and extremely challenging. The track itself is situated in a natural bowl, and, through the use of many turns, manages to be a long track, completely visible from the bowl edges, fine for spectators and certainly both fast and rugged enough for the riders.

The big question this year centered around Sue Fish and Johanna Stenersen. Sue, the reigning champion, was a good bet to repeat, even with the addition of the Grand Prix into the scoring system. Her closest competition, having given the Fish a real run for her money in the earlier Texas race, was Johanna. Both girls were psyched for the event, and both had plenty of fans in attendance to cheer them on.

Saturday's action centered around

teammate, Carey Steiner. This double win gave Sue a strong head start in the points standings after day one, points that would be useful in earning her second National Championship. As it turned out, Sue would need those points. Sunday's motocrosses were not nearly so one-sided.

The first 125cc Expert moto, however, could well have been a repeat of one of the GPs. Sue got off the line in fourth, behind Dede Cates, Johanna Stenersen and Barbara Speilman. Fish began working through the pack, and, as the leaders got into a bit of trouble, moved out in front, not to be passed again in the moto.

Johanna Stenersen was perhaps tired of being a bridesmaid as the second 125 Expert moto got under way. She put her Yamaha — which, incidentally, seemed to have a slight power edge over Fish's YZ — at the front of the pack and kept it there, with Fish threatening only occasionally, as she had problems of her own in fending off a charging Dede Cates in third position. The

range of abilities in the women's Expert class were obvious, as the top riders would literally fling their small machines over one particularly rutted uphill, while those farther back in the pack would carefully slow and try to pick a consistent line. Stenersen held her lead, Fish followed her in for second place and for the overall 125cc class win and Championship.

The first 250 Expert moto was, in the opinion of many observers, the best race of the weekend. Sue got a holeshot and all seemed normal, but Johanna was close behind. It became obvious that Stenersen



Fish pursues Stenersen over the rugged Escape Country surface.



Da Winnah!



Kasey Rogers (with hat) is the driving force behind the IWMA.

the Grand Prix. The top riders, those competing for the Championship, would race in two two-hour GPs, one each for the 250cc and the 125cc classes. A scant three-hour break was provided between the two races to allow some respite from the draining heat.

Sue seemed to take to the GP riding like, well, a fish to water . . . she won both the 250cc and the 125cc Expert classes, races which saw a sizable number of DNFs. In both races she was followed across the finish line by her Crown Cycles



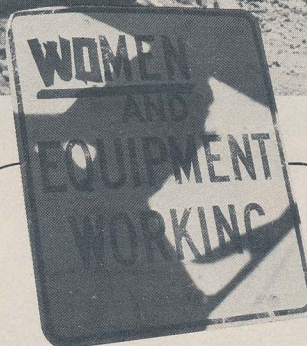
in a left-hander atop the Euro Track hill. There was room for two bikes in the middle of the turn, but space for only one in the exit which both had chosen. Bikes tangled, and Fish was tossed to the ground. Her arm and ankle both bruised from the fall, Sue righted the Yam quickly and held second place, cruising slowly for a lap while her body sorted out the pains. She later regained most of her earlier pace, but had no chance of catching Johanna, who had put a good distance between herself and the rest of the class.

The second moto, too, belonged to Stenersen, but in this case she barely had to fight for it. A strong holeshot put her at the front, never to be seriously challenged. Fish, still smarting from her crash and undoubtedly knowing that a finish in the race would seal the Championship, rode strategically. By the end of the race Johanna had a secure enough lead to profile for the crowd a bit over the Escape Country jumps. Her win gave her the 250cc Championship, but the



Rhe Helms in a search for shade.

would get by, as Sue was taking careful, consistent lines in the corners while Johanna seemed willing to change lines and tackle rougher sections of track to pick up any advantage. In a short time she did manage to pass, and Fish began pulling out the stops in an attempt to regain the lead. The racing was as close as any; time and again Sue would tuck a wheel up inside or outside of Stenersen, only to have the door shut on her or to be outpowered in the next straight. About midway through the moto Fish took the chance, forcing her Yamaha alongside that of Johanna



RESULTS

GRAND PRIX

- 125 Expert
 1) Sue Fish
 2) Carey Steiner
 3) Rhe Helms

- 250 Expert
 1) Sue Fish
 2) Carey Steiner
 3) Cherry Stockton

MOTOCROSS

- 125 Expert
 1) Sue Fish
 2) Johanna Stenersen
 3) Dede Cates

- 250 Expert
 1) Johanna Stenersen
 2) Sue Fish
 3) Carey Steiner

overall, by virtue of both GP wins and the 125cc Championship, went to Sue.

All of the women deserve commendation. The racing was hard, fast and flashy; equal to, if not more exciting than, several of the more prestigious races we've covered in the past year. It is hoped that the IWMA (International Women's Motocross Association) can capitalize on the success of this year and provide the facilities necessary to make next year's a spectator's, as well as a racer's, event. There will certainly be plenty to see.